THE TRANSFIGURED LIFE

J. H. MYERS

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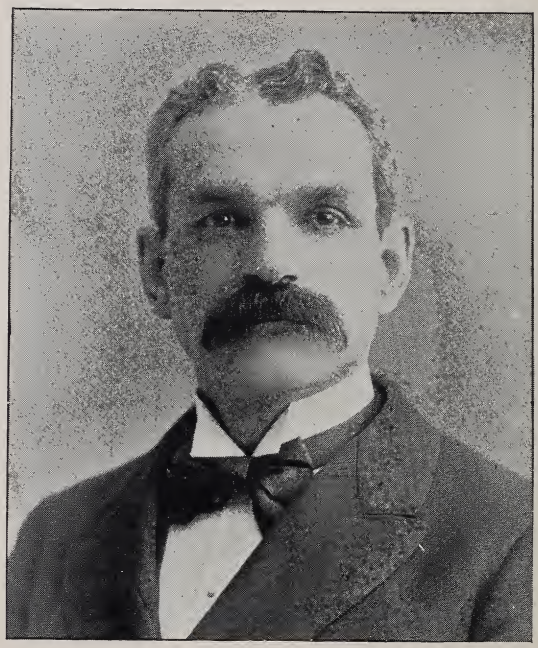

J. H. MYERS

The Transfigured Life

BY

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Author of "Philosophy of Faith"

WITH INTRODUCTION

BY

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MY FAVORITE BOOK

(Psa. cxix, 11.)

I LOVE thy word, O God, yea, more
Than all the books of ancient lore;
A charm more sweet within its page
Than wisest lines of modern sage.
It charms my soul; my thought intent
By day and night on thee is bent.

Not always thus my heart did yearn
The secrets of thy truth to learn;
I found delight in trivial things,
And sought the taste that culture brings,
Unaided by the light divine,
That from thy truth doth ever shine.

The poet lent his sweetest charm;
With classic lore I thought no harm
To fill the mind. With wise and fair,
In gay converse, with learned air,
I loved to talk and spend the day,
Which slipped, it seemed, so quick away;
Or, with the students learned I sat,
And lectured wise on this and that,
Of Plato's wisdom, Plautus' wit,
With here and there a pungent hit
At modern manners, shams, and rant,
"Religious knaves, and pious cant."

The Stoics wise, with learned phrase,
I'd glibly quote, as latest phase
Of my belief: in this I sought
To drown the voice of th' urgent *ought,*
That would not down, but up would start,

Though 'ppressed by music, wisdom, art;
But ever like a soul within
My soul, with secret woe and sin
Distressed, did cry, and cry for pain,
As if 'twould ne'er be heard again,
If, unheeded now its wise behest,
I elsewhere sought for peace and rest
Than in the word so long forgot,
And in the Christ I heeded not.

All this is changed: my heart, made new
In love of Christ, delights to view
The path made plain by urgent ought;
Though rough it seem I shun it not.
The culture learned from wisdom, art,
Is useless not, but to my heart
New meaning hath, a nobler thought
Than when, alone, the word forgot,
I sought for peace and found it not.

My studies in my duty done
Are sanctified, and through both come
A nobler life and better plan,
With love to God and love to man;
And, best of all, the word is sweet,
A lamp to guide my willing feet,
A charm and comfort in distress,
A gift my fellow-man to bless.

I love thy word, O God, yea, more
Than all the books of ancient lore;
A charm more sweet within its page
Than wisest lines of modern sage.
It charms my soul; my thought intent
By day and night on thee is bent.

INTRODUCTION

It is a privilege to write a word of introduction to a volume the spirit and purpose of which will commend it to every believer in the transforming power of the religion founded by the Lord Jesus Christ. The author of this volume is one of those men who are born with the power of living in the heart of things. His mind penetrates into the inner meaning of the teachings of the New Testament, and out of the fullness of a life that has been enriched by the transforming influence of the Spirit of Christ he sets forth in clear and forceful manner a series of truths which are essential to that enlargement, enrichment, and unfolding of the spiritual life which constitute a life of goodness.

The author clearly recognizes the truth that there is no religion inseparable from life. Life and religion are one, and true religion is no other way of life than living in accordance with the life and teachings of the divine

Master. That personal enrichment which ought to be the privilege of every believer in the religion of Jesus Christ comes only to him whose inward life has been transformed by the Holy Spirit, and nowhere are the nature and results of this transformation described with more directness and power than in the pages of this volume.

The religion of Christ means the enrichment and enlargement of life, intellectually as well as spiritually. Growth in religion means entrance into new regions of spiritual life, and brings new and deeper experiences of the soul, deeper knowledge of God, deeper knowledge of one's self, and a deeper delight in the things that are true and pure and noble. Fullness of life in the noblest sense can come only to the soul whose spiritual aspirations have been transfigured and purified and intensified by the Holy Spirit, and it is because of the emphasis which this volume puts upon the influence of the Spirit of Christ in the enrichment and enlargement of a man's life that it ought to be brought to the attention of all who would experience in fullest measure the joys

and usefulness of a transfigured life. He who lives the transfigured life lives a life so true, so deep, so rich, and so pure that he lifts the world toward higher things; and no human life can bear its richest fruitage which has not known the transforming influence of the Spirit of the blessed Master as disclosed in the New Testament.

The greatest power in the world, from the human standpoint, is personality, and he who would lead others to noble living must keep in mind the truth that the greatest stimulus to goodness is goodness in others. Christ attracted others to himself by the evident goodness of his life rather than by his teachings. But personality is most potent for good only when it is transfigured and regulated by the purifying and ennobling influence of the Spirit of Christ. The highest joy that can come to the human soul is the full, free, and noble putting forth of power in behalf of humanity, and this joy is always greatest when the forces of mind and heart have been transfigured by the influences of the Holy Spirit.

It is the mission of this book to lead as many

as possible to live the transfigured life, and I am confident that in giving to the world the results of his study of God's word the author will exert a far-reaching influence for good in the direction of causing others to know the larger and richer life which God has in store for everyone who undergoes that transfiguration so clearly and attractively portrayed in the pages that follow.

ALBERT LEONARD.

Syracuse University.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; OR, THE LIFE OF PRIVILEGE

THE IDEAL

Hold thou fast an Ideal pure,
High, and holy; keep secure—

Lofty, perfect, high, and bright,
Shining with celestial light.

Leave the lower; seek the higher;
Ever upward still aspire.

In the highest and the best
Thou shalt find the sweetest rest.

Never lower, always higher!
Thrill thy soul with heavenly fire!

Upward! Upward! Still ascend,
For the best thy soul contend.

Rest not in a lower plain,
When the heights thou may'st attain.

Heed thy inmost soul's behest:
Love the highest, seek the best.

CHAPTER I

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit; or, The Life of Privilege

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts xix, 2.) This was the question Paul asked of the Ephesian converts upon his first introduction to them. The Revised Version says, "when ye believed." In either case two distinct acts or experiences are distinguished, namely, *believing* and *receiving the Holy Spirit*. It is implied that these experiences might have occurred at about the same time. As a matter of fact, however, the "baptism with the Holy Spirit," in the case of the Ephesian Church, followed the "believing." "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them" (Acts xix, 6).

Paul evidently considered it an important matter that believers should also be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and that this experience should follow soon after conversion. He evi-

dently considered this the intent and purpose of the Gospel, and as all-important, a necessary equipment for service in spreading the glad news.

1. *This was the common experience of the early Church.* Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts i, 8). "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until endued" (Acts i, 4). The disciples were believers; they "tarried" (Acts i, 14). The Holy Ghost came upon them (Acts ii, 4). They were endued with power. Witness Peter's sermon and its results, also the subsequent history of the Church. There was a marvelous change in the disciples and in the power of their utterances (Acts iv, 8, 13). There was a power not of themselves working through them. Stephen was a man full of the Holy Ghost, and consequently full of "faith and power" (Acts vi, 5, 8).

2. *The laity were included in the blessing.* There was gathered together in that upper chamber one hundred and twenty souls, including the apostles and men and women, be-

lievers all in Jesus, the nucleus of the early Church (Acts i, 15; ii, 1). They were all baptized with the Holy Ghost.

3. *This experience was intended for, and experienced by, Gentile believers, as well as Jews.* Philip went to Samaria and preached the word, and many believed. Shortly afterward the apostle sent Peter and John to them, deeming it important that they should be at once instructed and receive the enduement of power. Peter and John prayed for them, laid hands on them, and they, even the despised Samaritans, received the Holy Ghost.

The illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, exhibited in the broadening of intellectual and spiritual vision, was nowhere more manifest than in the breaking down of the wall of prejudice in Jewish believers and expanding their ideas to the grand scope of the Saviour's plan to save all men. That the Gentiles should be fellow-sharers of all spiritual blessings in Christ was authoritatively settled by the apostles in the first great council concerning circumcision, God's dealing in the example of

Cornelius being cited by Peter as the conclusive argument as to God's purpose to grant the Holy Spirit to all believers everywhere (Acts xv, 7, 8): "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us." "The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts xi, 15).

May we not logically conclude from the foregoing that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was the common experience of the early Church; that it was usually experienced subsequent to, but soon after, conversion; that the disciples expected all converts to enjoy this blessing as an equipment for future service; that they considered this experience so important that they sent special messengers to give instruction regarding it to believers who had not received such special instruction; that this blessing was extended to the Gentile world and to all believers? The Ephesians as

soon as they heard gladly received. Have you?

4. *Jesus intends this blessing for us now.* "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Joel ii, 28; Acts ii, 17). It was God's purpose from the beginning, as declared in prophecy, to fill his people with his Spirit. This purpose began to be realized in the closing days of the old dispensation, and in the beginning of the new, by the Holy Spirit taking possession of every believer in the early Church, who by faith claimed the blessing. This was, in fact, the inauguration of the new dispensation, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. The full realization of this prophetic promise awaits only a believing Church. The success of the Church has been about in proportion to its Spirit-filled membership.

That this blessing is the present privilege of believers is forever set at rest by Acts ii, 38, 39, where Peter expressly declares that the blessing is for all: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ

for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Dear friend, are not we among the "far off," the "called" of God?

What shall we say, then? Is not this experience, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a blessed *life of privilege?* We have tried to make each step of the foregoing exposition so plain that there can be no possible question as to the logic of our conclusions. Must we not then conclude that this blessing is the privilege of the Church of Christ *now?* And may we not then say *our privilege?* But the Church is made up of individuals, you and me. May we not logically, then, descend to the individual personal pronoun, and dare to write *my* instead of *our?* Nay, must we not do so? We cannot retrace our steps without doing violence to the word of our Lord and to our own reasoning powers. We will take this ground, then, with confidence, from which we will never retreat: The baptism of the Holy Spirit is *my privilege now.*

But what God has promised and prepared for his children he has a right, has he not? to expect of his children. The believer's privilege in Christ becomes to the obedient disciple his duty. But, alas! have we not lived far short of our privilege? Can the blessed Master do all that he might through us while we are not filled with his Spirit? "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v, 18). "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John xx, 22). This is the Master's command to every believer. The Church of the first century is not an exception, but a sample of what the Church should be in every century.

How many of us present-day Christians have been living long years in the cellar of Christian experience, catching now and then glimpses of radiant glory from the cellar window, and rejoicing for a brief space, then going back into our dark corners to mope among the bats, saying to ourselves, "Yes, it is glorious, but, alas! it is not for me." O, poor deluded souls! let us up and out of this cellar experience, into the sunlight of eternal love and truth, where our Lord intended us to

live! "Be filled with the Spirit." Plead your privilege in the risen Christ. The cellar for the bats and spiders, but God's sunlight for his own dear children. Fix deep in the heart these unalterable conclusions from God's word, and prayerfully ponder them:

1. The disciples of the early Church, at the time of, or subsequent to, their conversion, received a second distinct experience, called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit."

2. The disciples expected all subsequent believers to receive this blessing.

3. Such an experience is promised in the word of God to every believer at the present time.

4. What is promised to God's children he has a right to expect of his children.

Ponder these facts, brood over them, think on the word, pray for illumination, until the last great truth shall dawn upon you gloriously, namely:

5. This blessing is for me, now.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT { THE LIFE OF / OUR / MY } PRIVILEGE, NOW.

—Acts ii, 39.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT — HOW RECEIVED; OR, THE WAY OF FAITH

JESUS, MY LORD

JESUS is Lord, he is my King;
He saves me by his grace;
How sweet to him my wants to bring,
And trust in every place!

I feel his presence in my heart,
How dear that presence is!
I know my Lord will ne'er depart,
His care he constant gives.

My Lord, my God, my King, to thee
Myself, my all, I give;
Emptied of self I'd ever be,
And only in thee live.

I own thee Lord, and Guide of life:
Where'er thou lead'st I'll go;
In restful ease, or conflict rife,
No other will I'll know.

CHAPTER II

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit—How Received; or, The Way of Faith

"He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John xx, 22). It is the glory of God to give; it is the crowning glory of man in humility, but with faith, to receive. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv, 7.) Surely all boasting on our part is excluded. "All things" come of him; but the crowning gift, through the cross and the resurrection, is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Having settled it once for all that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the privilege of every believer at the present time, we inquire, How is the blessing received? We answer, By faith, just as we received the blessing of forgiveness. We cannot buy the blessing; we cannot claim it or merit it by any right whatever, other than through the promise of

Jesus, based upon his merit, as manifest in his sacrifice.

But there are certain conditions to be fulfilled on our part. There are certain steps for us to take in the way of faith. While this blessing is intended for all, it is not received by all, because they do not on their part fulfill the conditions. This blessing is not for the rebellious and unconverted. It is not for self-willed believers, nor for those who love some secret sin more than they love God. There are electric lamps in our church, there is an electric plant in town, but there is no light. Why? The connection is broken; the wires are befouled or grounded, or there is some defect in the lamp. The lamps must first be set to rights, then the connection must be made by a human will, then comes light to the full capacity of the lamps. Now let us take the steps in

THE WAY OF FAITH.

Let us be logically clear, and then fail not to take the blessing that our Father is holding out to every believer. "Receive ye." "The promise is unto you" (Acts ii, 39). We think

that every believer is led up to this blessing soon after conversion, and his subsequent success and usefulness in Christian living depend upon his reception or rejection of it. The Ephesian Church, as we have seen, received the blessing as soon as they heard of their great privilege by the mouth of Paul. Have we as readily entered every open door to which God has led us in our experience? Paul received the Holy Spirit three days after his conversion, when Ananias laid his hands upon him. "The Lord hath sent me," said Ananias, "that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts ix, 17). What hinders the reader of these words to receive him now? "There is no respect of persons with God."

How shall I receive him?

1. *Repent.* The Holy Spirit is ready to enter every heart; he cannot because of hindrances there. He warns and admonishes, but he cannot enter, to fill, to comfort, to possess, to endue with power for service, where sin is entertained and loved. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every

one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you" (Acts ii, 38, 39). Peter evidently intended that a genuine repentance and forgiveness of sins should precede the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He does not say how long. The language implies that it might be immediately. With Paul it was three days after his conversion (Acts ix, 17). In the case of the Samaritans it was some days after (Acts viii, 14-17). With Cornelius it followed immediately (Acts x, 44). With you, dear friend, how long?

There is need of repentance in believers. Perhaps their repentance was complete so far as they knew at conversion, but new light reveals depths in the soul that need cleansing power. There are lurking hindrances. Bring them all to the light and to the altar. Our fathers and grandfathers used to read a book called *Wesley's Sermons*. It would be time well spent for their sons and grandsons to read Sermon No. 14, entitled "The Repentance of Believers."

We need to do as the Israelites did before the passover. They searched the house diligently for leaven, and cast out the last particle that might be found, and thoroughly cleansed their dwelling. Then they pronounced a curse on any possible speck of leaven that might have been overlooked or remained hidden in spite of their utmost vigilance. So we as believers need to go over again thoroughly the ground of our consecration, to reach the innermost recess of our hearts for the last bit of leaven of sin that may abide there. And when we discover it cast it out, or if we feel our inability to deal with it, bring it and lay it at Jesus's feet; forever renounce it, and let him deal with it. He is able.

Having done this with all that is known, then, like the devout Israelite of old, pronounce, in God's name, your solemn curse upon all the unknown sin that may have escaped your vigilance, and all that the future may bring to light. Leave it then with God, and have done with it forever. The *act of renunciation* is yours. The matter is then in

God's hands, and he will deal with it. He is able. Afflict yourself no more with it. It is no longer yours; it is his. Let it alone. Now prepare your house for the coming guest.

By an act of *dedication* on your part say, "O God, come in to thine own house. This body, this spirit, this soul of mine are thine wholly and forever. Come in, fill, possess thine own forever."

2. *Obey.* "And we are witnesses of these things," says Peter; "and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts v, 32). The pathway of obedience brings even to human eyes glimpses of the supernatural. The women, bearing precious spices to anoint the dead body of Jesus, found not a closed tomb, but an open and empty sepulcher, and, moreover, saw angels, who said to them, "Go, tell his disciples" (Matt. xxviii, 7-10). They did not tarry to enter into an argument with the angels, as we may well imagine a modern philosopher as doing, nor did they stop to make a scientific investigation, neither did they wait to chip off a piece of the rock as a souvenir. They

simply did as they were told. They obeyed. And what followed? Why, as they went on this simple errand Jesus met them. The pathway of obedience brings the vision of Jesus.

The disciples likewise went by faith to the appointed place in Galilee, as Jesus commanded them, and there they received that glorious vision of their risen Lord, and new and exalted conceptions of his kingdom, in the great commission, "All power is given unto me; therefore, go, disciple, baptize, teach." And in proportion as God's people have obeyed this last command, in that measure they have realized the divine power resting on them, and the continued Presence, "Lo, I am with you alway."

The disciples tarried at Jerusalem as Jesus commanded them. They waited, prayed, expected, believed, and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These were the simple and easy steps from the empty tomb to Pentecost.

Obedience implies *the surrendered will.* Perfect obedience comes through perfect surrender. This was what made Abraham great. Where God called he went without debate. It

was enough to know that God called, and no more. A good soldier does not debate his orders with his commander. It is safe to trust the orders from our Commander. He is looking for willing volunteers. The collapse of self is the beginning of the life of power. The Spirit will not dwell in a rebellious and self-willed soul.

The surrendered will implies the acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and his law as the governing rule of life. There must be on our part a transference of the governing power from self over to Christ before the Spirit can take full possession. Some are willing to acknowledge Christ as Saviour in a kind of general, indefinite way, and stop there, forgetting that if salvation is complete we must also acknowledge him as Lord of life. We place him upon the throne of our being, and take his will, his laws, his commands as the rule of conduct to the last detail. Then his Spirit possesses us fully. O, come with me, dear heart, and crown him Lord of all in your individual life. You shall have the vision of "Jesus himself." His reward is with him to give to

them that follow him fully. "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (Num. xiv, 24).

3. *Ask.* "Ye have not, because ye ask not" (James iv, 2). Alas, how many well-meaning people stop at this point. They say, "O yes, this is all very beautiful, but not for me; perhaps for Brother A, or Sister So and So, but not for me." And thus many of us fail to put in a claim for that which is rightfully ours. "But will God hear my cry?" Yes, if it is according to his will. "This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John v, 14). But is the baptism of the Holy Spirit according to his will? Listen: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke xi, 13.) Then my prayer is according to his will, for he has prepared this blessing for me, and desires to give it to me.

4. *Believe.* Believe this unalterable word of God. My prayer is according to his will. He does hear me. I am longing for him to come in. Hear him again: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Then I will confidently *expect.* My look is Godward. My expectation is of thee. I wait, Lord, before thee. Let no doubt linger near. Lord, I will, I do believe thy word. What more shall I do? *There is nothing more to do.* Quit all works. "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii, 9). Cease struggling and looking at self any more at all; rest down on the word, and just simply believe. Ah, how restful, how sweet! "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i, 13). "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. iii, 2, 14).

Received by faith. Yes, there is no other

way. What remains then for me to do but to—

5. *Take.* I am looking for the Holy Spirit. I am asking him to come in. My request is according to God's will. My look is unto him. He is anxious that I should have this blessing. What follows? Why, I have. "And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John v, 15).

"I will consider then that from this moment I have the blessing?" Yes. "But I feel nothing." Never mind feeling. Believe God's word. This is not the way of feeling. It is *the way of faith.* The word has little to say about feeling, but much about faith. God will give joy in due season in the pathway of obedience—joy, more perhaps than you can contain—but that is his part; leave it to him; do you obey, and believe.

Here is the promised gift in the outstretched hand of the Father. Here is the outstretched hand of the asking child. What is left? Again we say, only to *take.* The last supreme act of faith is the simple act of taking. Is

not this chain of faith forged in the eternal heat of God's truth? "Receive ye." This appropriating of omnipotence by God's children delights the heart of the Father. Philosophy may laugh at it, but the soul which experiences it can say with John, "We know" (1 John v).

Note the sublime paradox of faith in its mighty appropriating power in Mark xi, 24. "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them" (Revised Version). "Believe that ye have received, and ye shall have." There is something so simple and restful about this, something that we are all able to do, precluding all struggle or anxiety on our part. Is not the Church suffering for lack of this ability, or rather from its unwillingness to take the Father's blessing? Alas! how many pray earnestly, and come up to just this point, and stop. They do not take the blessing.

A Christian woman had been earnestly seeking this blessing. Her pastor had tried to show her the way of faith. One day she invited him to tea. He asked her for a cup of

tea. She held it out to him. He still persisted in repeatedly asking for a cup of tea, while the cup was still held out to him. Much perplexed, the good sister at last exclaimed in astonishment, "Why, Mr. ———, what do you mean? You asked me for a cup of tea and I am holding it out to you; why don't you take it?" "My good sister," said her guest, "don't you understand? You have been asking God for his Holy Spirit, and he is all the time holding out the blessing to you." "O, I see," she cried, as a flood of light swept over her, and she entered into a new and blessed experience through the simplicity of faith. "Receive ye."

Friend, if with great care and sacrifice you had prepared a beautiful and most useful gift for your best friend, how would you feel if your friend should spurn the gift, or simply neglect it, neither take it nor thank you for it? "O, but," you say, "that would be impossible; he would surely take it, for I know him and he knows me. I cannot conceive of his neglect." Is it not the most natural thing for the obedient and loving child to take the

gift of loving sacrifice and toil from the father or mother? They understand each other. Even so, and will not you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit? At what pains and cost has our loving Father prepared this gift for us! Shall we be ingrates? Do we not understand our Father?

A Christian dreamed that he died and went to heaven. An angel conducted him through the palace beautiful. In one room there were a great number of packages, all neatly arranged. On examination he discovered that each package bore his name and address. "What does all this mean?" he said. "These," said the angel, "are answers to your prayers. You prayed for these things. They were sent by a special messenger to your door, but as no one came to the door to take them they had to be returned." How many blessings God's own people lose by simply failing to take that which a loving Father holds out to them.

The Lord told Joshua to lead Israel across Jordan into Canaan, declaring that the land was theirs, and that he had already given it to them, and had prepared the way before them.

Yet the enemy was still in the land, and Jordan at flood tide rolled between. Nevertheless Joshua believed the naked promise of God. With no outward evidence of a prepared way Joshua commanded the priests to take up the ark and to go into Jordan, and he commanded the people to follow. God had promised, but there was required on the part of Joshua and of Israel the last step, the step of faith, right out into the water. And what followed? Why, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark touched the brim of the water, then it divided hither and yon, and they passed through dry-shod (Josh. iii, 15). Dare to say from this moment, "I have the blessing." Take the last step of faith. God has gone before and prepared the way.

We will remember not to seek this blessing for any selfish purpose. We will not make the mistake of Simon (Acts viii, 9-23), but we seek it, we claim it, we have him, the indwelling Holy Spirit, now, and from henceforth, always, for God's glory and his glory only.

THE WAY OF FAITH.

1. *Repent.* Acts ii, 38.
2. *Obey.* Acts v, 32.
3. *Ask.* James iv, 2; Luke xi, 13.
4. *Believe.* Gal. iii, 2, 14.
5. *Receive.* 1 John v, 15; Mark xi, 24.

THE TRANSFIGURED LIFE

TRANSFIGURED

Into thy likeness change me, Lord,
For man's frail strength thy might afford;
In place of bondage freedom give,
Henceforth alone in thee I live.

Take thou the rule within my heart,
Bid all things else from thence depart;
Make thou within my soul thy throne,
Reign thou within henceforth alone.

I place the crown upon thy brow,
In joyous love before thee bow;
Emptied of self, of thee possessed,
My soul in sweetness claims its rest.

I rest, I sing, I labor on,
In strength not mine the victory's won;
The promised power is freely given,
Through man doth shine the light of heaven.

From rule of self forever free,
Into thy likeness changed I'd be;
Thy Spirit, Lord, my being fill,
Work thou through me thine own sweet will.

CHAPTER III

The Transfigured Life

In no case has the power of the Holy Spirit upon men been more manifest than in its effects upon the early Church. So great and marvelous were the effects manifest to men that nothing less than the sublime word *transfigured* can be used to describe it. Even as Jesus was transfigured before his disciples, even so men were transfigured in the sight of men when the Holy Spirit came upon them.

Before this event they were as other men were. After this they were different, and so markedly different that even their enemies declared that the disciples had caught the spirit of that same Jesus whom they had killed, and acted like that same Jesus whom they had crucified; and they became alarmed, because, while they had killed but one Jesus, they now had in their midst hundreds of copies of that same Jesus, fired with intense zeal and enthusiasm, with the same sublime spirit, self-forget-

fulness, meekness, persistence, and love, spreading everywhere the doctrine they had nailed to the cross and thought was securely buried in Joseph's tomb. It was indeed *a transfigured Church.* "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts iv, 13).

This marvelous transformation was especially manifest in two directions: first, in a personal change and transformation of individual character; second, in the amazing growth of the early Church in numbers, power, and influence.

The personality of the disciples was the same, yet amazingly different—the same persons, the same minds, the same bodies, but with a different spirit, and with such a supernatural, inexplicable, awe-inspiring power about them that even their enemies stood astonished before it. This was manifest—

1. *In their boldness.* "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, . . . they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Before they had been timid, hesitating, doubtful. They ran away and left Je-

sus when he was betrayed. They dared offer no testimony in his defense at his trial, no protest against the injustice of the prosecution. Now they openly declare that those who crucified Jesus are blood-guilty; and they furthermore declare with sublime assurance that Jesus is alive. They preach the resurrection with supreme confidence, and press home the sins of the people upon their consciences till they are pricked in the heart. They preach with confidence the necessity of repentance even to self-satisfied Pharisees.

And this they do not vindictively, but in love. In no way is the transfiguration more manifest than in this spirit of love in which these startling, thrilling utterances are sent forth. Their boldness is a moral, spiritual boldness, begotten of a sublime, unswerving confidence in the right; and this is as far as the north is from the south from that mere bravery and bluster which Peter exhibited when he drew the sword and cut off the servant's ear in the garden. With what supernatural courage and true boldness Jesus rebuked this earth bluster when with loving hand he healed the

wound and ordered the sword returned to its scabbard! Now the transfigured Peter has lost his earth bluster, his sword bravery, but he exhibits a like supernatural courage, bathed in love, when he stands before the high officials of the Sanhedrin with John and declares, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts iv, 19, 20). "We cannot but speak." Again, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v, 29). This is the boldness of heaven. This is the calm, cool, sweet courage of Jesus, born of a consciousness of divine power within and back of and upholding the speaker. The representative of the Almighty should exhibit loving boldness.

2. *A marvelous quickening of intellectual power and spiritual vision.* Their memories were quickened. Jesus's promise that when the Holy Ghost should come he should bring things to their remembrance was fulfilled. They remembered his words and saw their spiritual meaning, and began to comprehend

their world-wide significance. And circumstances as they opened before them revealed still more the wide scope of Jesus's plan, as doors were opened here and there into the great Gentile world about them.

In the light of this inward illumination the Old Testament became a new book to them. The risen Jesus, and afterward the Holy Spirit, opened to them the Scriptures, and their hearts burned within them with new light and joy, as the new light from the cross broke upon the old Scriptures. They see Jesus as the Christ now, foretold, revealed, typified, prepared for in every page of Old Testament story. Their preaching was scriptural. They preached the word, and the Spirit who inspired that same word applied it with power to the hearts of men. Note how Peter's sermon (Acts ii) and Stephen's sermon (Acts vii) are in every point based on Old Testament Scripture, and largely made up of that Scripture, but how the Spirit sent this older Scripture, this sword of his, to the hearts of the hearers! Preachers to-day would do well to heed this example: first, be filled with the Spirit; then, preach the word—

not our word, but God's word—asking the same Spirit, who inspired that word, to apply it to the hearts of our hearers. Would not more be cut to the heart than are if we so preached? And have we not the added advantage of a complete Bible, the New Testament with the Old?

3. *Supreme sacrifice*—nothing kept back; love of Christ above love of property; religious life on top, world life under. What a transformation! Life itself at Jesus's disposal—formerly running away to save life; now, courting death, if need be, to help God's work—property, life, all at the disposal of the risen Christ! Surely they had been with Jesus. Surely his Spirit now possessed them. No wonder the world marveled. It had not seen the like in many a day. And still at the present day the world wonders when a man acts like his Lord. Why should it be so strange a thing that a Christian should act like Jesus? He had but one business: to do his Father's will, to establish his kingdom. The disciples had but one business: to do as Jesus did.

The name Christian soon attached itself to

these people, and it meant the introduction into the world of a new conception of moral character and life. They were Christ-men, Messiah-men, anointed men—thus, in a sense, supernatural men, because possessed and actuated by divine power, and controlled and guided by that power in action and in life.

4. *Love* appeared as the controlling principle, the outward manifestation of the inner spirit. Not the selfish greed of gain, which had before controlled them in their individual occupations—not money, but Christ, was Lord of life. They left all for Jesus, yet no one suffered want.

5. A strange *supernatural power* seemed to accompany them in their work. Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts i, 8). And so they went forth here, there, everywhere, and a divine influence seemed to surround them and go forth from them. It manifested itself in marvelous utterances as if from the mouth of God himself, and in conviction in the hearts of hearers and in immediate reformation of life,

in healing power also upon bodies—in acts of love and mercy and helpfulness everywhere. And this power was accompanied by a sweet humility which itself spoke of its heavenly origin. "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" (Acts iii, 12.) The selfish principle in life was out of sight, and Christ was everywhere exhibited.

6. *A sweet and restful confidence* born of heaven was the background of all these manifestations of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The "Lo, I am with you" of Jesus was verified. With joy they took persecution, suffering loss of goods, even life itself, for thus they shared with Jesus in his gigantic task of saving men. What was the secret of their transfigured lives, their loving boldness, their self-forgetfulness, their loss of all, their unwearying sympathy, their service of love, their marvelous spiritual insight, and their power of expression? The Christ enthroned within—his Spirit possessing his temple. Can such things be now? Without doubt. This is what the Master expects of us. "The promise is unto you."

THE TRANSFIGURED CHURCH—ITS RAPID GROWTH

UNDER HIS HAND

(Ezra vii, 28; viii, 22.)

GRANT, Lord, thy hand to be upon us;
Under that hand we trust;
Show us the way through a land of danger
To our blest home of rest.

Protect and keep from harm thy people;
Hear thou our cry, we pray;
We claim thy guidance, thy care forever,
Through night and through the day.

Called from the world thy word to carry,
And this alone our aim,
Through hostile lands we march to Canaan,
But victory we claim.

The work is great, the burden heavy,
But thou art still our aid;
We rest in thee, we have thy Presence,
And we are not afraid.

We look to thee, lift up thy standard,
True soldiers all are we;
We claim thy grace, thy might, thy wisdom,
Our watchword "Victory."

CHAPTER IV

The Transfigured Church—Its Rapid Growth

The power of the Holy Spirit possessing fully the professed followers of Christ is strikingly manifest not only in the transfigured lives of individuals, but in the rapid numerical growth of the early Church, and in the manner in which this result was accomplished.

There were one hundred and twenty persons who tarried in the upper room at Jerusalem till the Holy Spirit came (Acts i, 15). Now turn to the book of Acts and mark with red ink the following passages. Then go back over them and study them frequently, till your soul catches the sublime conception of the early Church, and your mind and whole life are on fire with the same burning zeal of the one hundred and twenty, who simply did as Jesus told them to do, and received the Holy Ghost.

Begin with i, 15, already cited; turn the page to ii, 41: "The same day there were added unto

them about three thousand souls." The Spirit-filled Church does not rest in its rocking-chair selfishly enjoying the great blessings from God's hand. No, it is most actively engaged in work to save others, and God honors the efforts and gives the youthful Church new lessons in addition every day. Not only the large addition under Peter's sermon, but small additions every day, aggregating in a little while large numbers, under the faithful work of each individual member and all the members, attest the zeal of the unnamed laity as well as the leaders. Notice, ii, 47, with what full-hearted joy and gladness they did the work, and with what marked results: "Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Nothing so fills a soul with praise as the privilege of bringing another soul to Christ. No church is so filled with praise as the church at whose altar souls are daily born again. No church has so little trouble with its routine of administration as the church which is adding souls daily to the kingdom of Christ.

Again, in iv. 4, we read, "The number of the

men was about five thousand." A definite one hundred and twenty to begin with, now so rapid has been the growth that there is simply a rough estimate of numbers, "about five thousand," and men only are counted. Estimating the probable number of women and children believers, the number could easily be put at fifteen thousand, and this soon after Peter's sermon.

Again, in v, 14, we read, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." The lessons in addition have followed each other so rapidly that the bewildered historian could hardly take the time for accurate enumeration, but contents himself with a comprehensive expression, with two additional words of intensive meaning: "*more* added, *multitudes* both of men and women." And this is accomplished not by great sermons, but by the daily work of individual members, whose transfigured lives and inspired testimonies are irresistible.

But the youthful Church soon passes out of addition into multiplication. Notice vi, 1, "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied."

With such rapid growth it is not strange that some difficulties in administration arose. It may be of advantage for members of our churches, and of official boards in particular, at the present time, to pause a moment to discover if possible how the Spirit-filled Church managed difficulties of administration.

"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. . . . And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. . . . And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (vi, 1-8).

Complaint arises as to partiality in the care of the needy, evidently not intentional, but

from pressure of care on the apostles, from the multiplied duties arising from the rapid increase of believers. The Church is called together by the apostles and requested to elect seven men to have the oversight of those needing assistance, and to administer funds and supplies contributed for their relief. Three qualifications are specified by the apostles, honest, full of the Holy Ghost, wise. "They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." It was considered an essential qualification for this office that the incumbent should be filled with the Holy Ghost. It was evident that the thought was prominent in the minds of the members of the early Church, who cast their ballots for these officers, that *a Spirit-filled man was needed to administer the secular affairs of the church.* Would not the present-day church do well to heed this example? Should not elders, deacons, class leaders, stewards, and even trustees be men full of the Holy Ghost?

"He is an honest man, and has good business ability and considerable influence in the community; let us elect him trustee."

"Is he a man full of the Holy Ghost?"

"O, I don't know as to that; that don't matter so much, you know; he has influence."

"They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."

Is it strange that churches languish spiritually, are devoid of revival power, barely hold their own, when the officiary, who are to administer their affairs, lack the one qualification deemed essential by the early Church—"full of the Holy Ghost?"

And this deacon, this server of tables, "did great wonders and miracles among the people," and spake with such wisdom that the wisest logicians could not answer his arguments, but had to resort to stones to silence him. But God honored this Spirit-filled server of tables with the first diadem of martyrdom, and a vision of opened heavens and the exalted Christ at the right hand of God, rising from his throne to receive him to glory.

This incident of administration being settled, the Church takes another long step forward in its rapid expansion: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multi-

plied in Jerusalem greatly: and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts vi, 7). Note the language: the church was not only multiplied, but so rapidly that the historian with one nervous expression with an added intensive must say, "multiplied greatly." A peculiar feature of expansion also, now to be noted, is that "a great company of the priests are obedient to the faith." This is certainly a great transformation: the priest, conservative, stubborn, jealous, hedged round by prejudice, at last yields to the mighty power of a Spirit-filled people proclaiming the truth of the resurrection and Messiahship of Jesus—the priests at last.

It is important to notice how large a place Spirit-filled laymen fill in the rapid expansion of the early Church. The apostles themselves were laymen, called by Jesus from their daily occupations. But after Pentecost, filled with the Spirit, they seem as if moved by the right hand of the Almighty, and now they are exalted to sit upon twelve thrones and to lead the new Church to its world conquest. They have now become the true priesthood, because filled

with the divine Presence. This is the new order, which is to take the place of the old so soon to pass away.

The seven deacons are chosen by the congregation from their own number. But God immediately honors them, and himself exalts them to be ministers of the word as well as of secular affairs. Samaria (Acts viii, 5) receives the word at the mouth of Philip. Peter and John are sent to complete the organization of the new church. The Ethiopian is led to Christ by this same Philip, and carries the light to unknown lands. Traveling laymen proclaim the glad news in Antioch. Converts are gathered, and Barnabas is sent to organize a church, which becomes the first great missionary church, sending forth Paul and Barnabas to the Gentile world (Acts xi, 20-24; xiii, 1-3).

And how was all this accomplished? By Spirit-filled laymen going about proclaiming everywhere the Messiahship and resurrection of Jesus, while the apostles remained at Jerusalem. "And they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . . They that were scat-

tered abroad went everywhere talking the word" (Acts viii, 1-4). This persecution, begun by the death of Stephen, instead of putting out the fire, causes it to spread everywhere. Samaria is now ablaze with the new truth (Acts viii, 14).

Persecution ceases for a time, but the Church is still expanding, not only by addition, but so rapidly that the sacred writer still thinks of it as multiplication. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts ix, 31).

The Jewish authorities, thoroughly alarmed, attempt to stay this marvelous progress of the new Church by the arrest and imprisonment of Peter, but in vain. Peter, with angel guidance, walks through bolted gates of iron to freedom and renewed service, and the tide, stayed for a moment, takes new impetus. "But the word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts xii, 24).

Paul and Barnabas start forth on their remarkable mission, first to the Jews and then to

the Gentile world, but not without difficulty. Spirit guidance insures victory, but does not promise an easy road to success. No bed of roses for these men. They are made heroes not by conferred titles, but by the death grapple with obstacles. They had set themselves a task that needed supernatural aid indeed—a hopeless task from a human point of view—confronted by a wall of Jewish prejudice heaven high, and a black pall of heathen darkness, philosophy, worldliness, and sensuality, hitherto supposed to be an insurmountable barrier. Without that divine Presence of which they were continually conscious they would have turned back.

But nowhere is the courage, faith, hope, and sublime confidence of the transfigured Church more apparent than in the hopefulness with which these men faced the whole world, and no persistence is more sublime than theirs when under seeming defeat they press on. This was divine power manifest in human form. These were men Spirit-possessed. For such God is looking to-day to carry on his work.

It is not surprising that they created a com-

motion among the people. Men at once saw that this doctrine was not only new, but demanded something of them radically different from their former mode of living. While some devout hearts long waiting for some divine manifestation to illuminate the darkness of their lives received the truth gladly, others were filled with alarm, and saw in this teaching the overthrow of their pet theories of speculation, and even more—the ruin of their ambitions and fortunes, and a radical change in the social order; hence their attitude was hostile, and their utmost effort was exerted for the immediate suppression of the heresy at all cost.

This marked divergence of opinion was everywhere manifest. It was especially prominent at Thessalonica, where, as it is said, some of the Jews "believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few" (Acts xvii, 4). But on the other hand the hostile Jews set the city aflame with mob violence and dragged certain of the believers before the rulers of the city, crying, "These that have turned the world upside down are come

hither also" (verse 6). And here we may pause. The world needed turning over, for it had been hitherto wrong side up.

But some may say that the circumstances of the early Church were peculiar, and is it reasonable to expect similar results in these days? Why not? Circumstances and manifestations, it is true, may differ, but why not results, if the Church to-day will fulfill the same substantial underlying conditions of personal experience of those spiritual realities which were the underlying motives in the lives of the early believers?

We may briefly summarize these spiritual conditions as follows:

1. A settled faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Son of God.

2. Unshaken confidence in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and present exaltation and mediation at the right hand of God. Unshaken confidence also in his ability and willingness to save immediately and to the uttermost.

3. Belief that he has sent his Holy Spirit, the divine Presence, into the world to guide, comfort, and strengthen his people.

4. The actual possession of the Holy Spirit through faith by each individual minister and layman in the Church; each believer realizing by actual experience that he is filled with the Holy Ghost.

5. Complete consecration of the individual, life, body, soul, and spirit, to Christ in every thought and emotion and action; the crowning of Christ not only as Saviour and Mediator, but as King, the Lord of life, to control, govern, and use—the self-life subjugated and Christ enthroned.

6. The complete dedication of property to Christ, to be administered, used, multiplied, preserved for his glory only, and for the advancement of his kingdom.

7. A Spirit-filled ministry and laity, continually proclaiming the truth in sermon, and also in common conversation. "They went everywhere talking the word"—sanctified conversation.

8. The missionary idea predominant—not only carrying the good news to individuals, but the Church as a whole sending forth representatives to proclaim the truth.

9. The spirit of love, charity, and service to those in need—no one in pinching want. The need of each met by the service of the many, through the Church's representatives, and by individual ministrations.

10. A continual attitude of prayer and communion with God, a feeling of divine guidance through the Holy Spirit.

"But," says one, "are you not going too far? Of course we cannot carry out all this now, you know. It would unsettle and change the existing order of things. Don't go too far, don't be a fanatic. Go slow. The Church will suffer." So said the unbelieving Jews whom Paul confronted, when the Spirit of God sent him to his work. The best Church members of Paul's time used just such language as the above. You are "turning the world upside down." Your principles will change the existing order. Well, so they may. The Christ when incarnated in human lives always changes things that are wrong. The alarm manifest when it is suggested that the principles which Jesus lived and taught be put into actual practice by those who call themselves by his name is evi-

dence that "the existing order," while bearing the name Christian, is in some measure at least —perhaps in a large measure—not Christian.

Let us back to Christ as individuals, and transform and regulate our lives by him, the only true standard. Let the change come by an inner reformation rather than by external calamity. Let the individual believer be filled with the Holy Spirit rather than to wait till the change to the whole come by sudden and overwhelming catastrophe in which the individual may be lost. For come there must such a change to the "existing order," as come it did to the ancient "existing order," which went down in blood, disaster, and confusion. But out of that confusion emerged the new order, the Church born anew, centering around a little company of men and women whose individual transfigured lives made a transfigured Church a glorious possibility.

"I BELIEVE GOD"

TRUST GOD

When the heart is sad and weary,
And all the world seems dreary;
When the damps of autumn chill thee,
And the piercing ice-winds fill thee
With dread;

When the friends of youth forsake thee,
And the ills of age o'ertake thee;
When no hand shall still caress thee,
And no voice remains to bless thee,
Trust God.

He who was by friends forsaken,
He who was by foes o'ertaken,
He who trod the wine press lonely,
He who drank the cup, he only
Gives rest.

Enter then the blest condition,
Share with him the sweet fruition:
Victory now, and rest forever;
Naught from God the soul can sever
Who trusts.

CHAPTER V

"I Believe God"

"I BELIEVE God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts xxvii, 25). So said Paul in the midst of that terrible storm and shipwreck. And this man, a prisoner, who believed God, became the practical commander of the ship and saved the lives of all. Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Elijah believed God in the face of seeming impossibilities, and was fed and vindicated. These names would never have been recorded in the glorious list of God's immortals had they not believed that God meant just what he said. They did not question how the apparently impossible could be, but with straightforward simplicity believed that it would be, and it was. Why? Because God said so, with absolutely no other reason. This was faith.

These men by believing the word vindicated the word. Every believer is a vindicator.

Every person who actively trusts God's word is an apologist of Scripture. The most successful apologists are those who use the word the most. The cloister apologist has his place, but it is not so important a place as that of the field apologist. It is fortunate that while so much unbelief exists, yet there are some of God's people who go on believing and acting the word, untrammeled by scholastic reasoning, thus vindicating by faith what the scholastic eventually confirms by tardy reason.

The soldier is not called upon to defend his sword, but to use it. He does not enter into a debate with his enemy as to the temper of his steel. The quick and energetic thrust is a better argument. Cold steel ends debate in favor of the best weapon and the man who knows how to use it. The word is a sword (Eph. vi, 17). Its edge has never been known to turn in an encounter. Its success has been phenomenal. It has won victories where fleshly wisdom has signally failed.

The men who have been most successful in winning souls, in reawakening an interest in the word—the most successful apologists—

who are they? Not closet philosophers, but sword users in the field, men who know the word and who use the word—Wesley, Spurgeon, Meyer, Moody, and a noble army besides. What we admire most in these men is their simple directness, and the mighty power of that simplicity. They believe that God means just what he says. This is the secret of that power which has been a wonder to many. This is the whole philosophy of the foolishness of faith. The need of the pulpit is men filled with the Spirit of God, and who preach the word of God in the power of that Spirit—less of preaching in the power of fleshly wisdom, more of scriptural preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the need of every individual believer—less of the self-life and more of the power of the Holy Spirit in every particular of life.

This is the need of the Church—less of schemes, financial and social, for running the Church, and more reliance on the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit in every detail of Church work. The Church to-day sometimes makes the same serious mistake that the Israelites made in the times of Isaiah and the other

prophets. They took their politics from Egypt or from Assyria, as the exigencies of the times seemed to demand. They adopted from them war tactics—horses and chariots, and so forth —contrary to God's express command. They adopted social customs and styles from the Sidonians and Canaanites against which God had expressly warned them. But their worldly policy ended in their utter overthrow and final captivity.

"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses; and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord! . . . Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit: and when the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is holpen shall fall, and they all shall fail together" (Isa. xxxi, 1-3). "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; . . . that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of

Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion" (Isa. xxx, 1-3).

How strikingly this world policy of "man-power" and "horse-flesh" are contrasted by the prophet with Israel's true source of power, the Spirit of God! Can we not with truth adopt the language of Isaiah at the present time and characterize a great deal of our Church work as "man-power" and "horse-flesh?" Let us remember that the Egyptian policy is always disastrous to the Church. Let us to the law and the testimony, and work according to the word.

While the faith of God's people has in a measure vindicated the word, and the success of the Church has been in proportion to its faith, yet might not the Church have achieved a still greater success had she believed more? The success of the past is only a tithe of what might have been achieved had the Church fully believed and obediently followed her Lord. Both our success and our failure should teach us to trust. God is calling his people to-day to a deeper, higher, broader experience of things

spiritual than they ever knew before. Will they enter and possess it? If so, they will see great things, and enjoy vastly larger fruitfulness.

Two things are essential—to believe the word and to use the word. But how can one use the word effectively who does not know the word, or does not practice its use? Do we not sometimes find ourselves woefully ignorant of our most effective weapon? Spanish gunnery became a byword for inefficiency in the Spanish-American war. The Spaniard, though equipped with modern improvements, did not know how to use them. But what shall we say of a vast number of Christians who when asked to point a soul to Christ are helpless, do not know what passage of Scripture will apply to a given difficulty, or where to find the fitting passage; or who in temptation are overcome by the adversary because they do not know the use of the sword—a soldier with plenty of ammunition and the best of equipment but ignorant of their use?

But back of knowledge and use of the word should be a simple trust in the word. The Israelites failed at Kadesh-barnea because they

did not believe the word. They "entered not in because of unbelief" (Heb. iv, 6). There is the same unbelief in the Church to-day, which prevents God's people from entering the land of blessing and fruitfulness. Some one will doubt this statement, but a little attention to facts will prove it. Israel's history, in the deliverance from Egypt, at Kadesh, in the promised land, is an object lesson in Christian experience of perpetual application.

Does not experience teach us that every believer, at or soon after conversion, is brought to the land of soul rest and victory, and is invited to enter? Alas, how many of us fail to do so! The vast majority of the Church to-day are wandering in the wilderness. We come to Kadesh and see the good land, but we say, "No, it cannot be for me"—"not for me," "not now," fatal words!—"possibly after death in heaven I may enjoy it." A great mistake! God intended this rest experience for his people now, in this life. It should be the normal common life of God's children. This was his intention. Read carefully the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews. The entire argument is a plea for

God's people now to enter into rest. They "entered not in because of unbelief" (Heb. iii, 19; iv, 6). "Let us fear," lest we fail in the same way (Heb. iv, 1; iii, 11). The question of rest in the present tense is forever settled by Heb. iv, 3: "For we which have believed do enter into rest." "Believe," "enter"—this is God's order. A majority of the Church do not enter, therefore they do not believe. These are the facts.

Let us examine the record, Num. xiii. The spies, returning, all said, "It is a good land"—a land of luxury, a land of plenty—and they produced the evidences. But they said also, "There are strong enemies, and we are weak;" so ten of them said, "We are not able to possess it" (verse 31). But Caleb and Joshua said, "We are able" (verse 30). The people believed the ten and went back into the wilderness, but the record shows their great mistake.

At a convention of representative Christian people the writer presented from Scripture evidences some of the attractions of the good land of promise, a land of peace, soul rest, plenty, joy, victory, and the question was asked, "How

many believe it is a good land?" And all gave assent to the proposition, which was written upon the blackboard:

"1. *It is a good land.*"

But it was shown that it is also a land of conflict, and there were enemies still in the land to be cast out, and we are weak, yes, very weak. But God's promises of help and victory through faith were cited, and with these promises in view the question was put, "How many will declare that we are able to possess it?" The vote was not unanimous, and yet a goodly number had confidence to believe that the Church, God's people, we, are able, and a second proposition was written:

"2. *We are able to possess it.*"

But God's army is made up of individuals, and a good leader without an army of individuals of the same spirit with himself is helpless. It was then shown from the word that the promise is to all—no respect of persons—and each individual must say the "I will" of faith to God's promise in order to make up the sum total of the victorious "We." So the third proposition was written:

"3. *I am able to possess it.*"

The people were asked to subscribe to this proposition, and but one hand was raised in assent. But after a little a few more took the leap of faith and subscribed the individual "I" in place of the general and too often indefinite "We" of our creeds. And this paucity of Calebs in our modern Church! Our great army of Christian soldiers with its self-complacent ease and boasted success? Yes, this was a fair representative Christian audience. The Calebs indeed are few. We enter not through the same example of fear and unbelief. We rest in the fatal "not for me," "not now." But, "Let us fear" (Heb. iv, 1); "Let us labor" (Heb. iv, 11).

We thus by our unbelief practically conclude that God does not, in our judgment, mean what he says; hence our conduct accuses him of insincerity. How then can we escape the odium of the denunciation of 1 John v, 10, terrible though it may seem? We practically make God a liar, because we profess to follow the Christ but really refuse in actual living to believe the record. Let us fairly and squarely

face the issue, and confess our unbelief, and humble ourselves before God. Then let us arise and go in and possess the land according to the word, and live in the land of soul rest—out of the land of defeat into the land of victory, out of weakness into strength. Caleb had a large possession there (Num. xiv, 24; Deut. i, 36; Josh. xiv, 14). Dear friend, there is a possession there for you; take it. Let us say, *"It is a good land. We are able to possess it. I am able to possess it; with God's help I will."* Let us say in our hearts, and inscribe on our banners, *"I believe God."*

MILK AND HONEY

ALL THE DAYS

"Lo, I am with you all the days" (Matt. xxviii, 20).

SUNDAY.

WHAT the day shall bring to me,
That in turn I give to thee;
Thou, O Lord, who giv'st the days,
Fill my soul with endless praise.

MONDAY.

Father, thou the source of all,
Humbly now on thee I call;
Help me, Lord, thy love to show,
Always, everywhere I go.

TUESDAY.

Teach me, Lord, thy word to know,
Teach me how the seed to sow;
Grant that I some soul may win
From the devious paths of sin.

WEDNESDAY.

Keep my tongue from speaking ill,
With thyself my spirit fill;
Give me thus some message sweet,
Bringing cheer to all I meet.

THURSDAY.

Thou wilt share my burdens, Lord,
Strength for all thou wilt afford;
Others' burdens may I bear,
Others' sorrows let me share.

FRIDAY.

Thus my day shall brighter be,
While I trusting rest in thee;
Peace I have without alloy,
Thrills my soul with love and joy.

SATURDAY.

May the past be all forgiven,
And the present filled with heaven;
Let my life proclaim thy praise,
Who art with me "all the days."

CHAPTER VI

Milk and Honey

"It is an exceeding good land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Num. xiii, 27; Deut. viii, 8). This was the message of the spies concerning the land which God had promised to Israel if they would but trust and obey him. And these terms, "milk" and "honey," have been symbols of fullness of spiritual blessing from that day to this. And what terms could be more fitting?—milk, signifying fullness and completeness of nourishment; honey, expressing the sweetness, the pleasure, the delight of the abundant life of the soul in Christ its Saviour. For Jesus is our Canaan; through him we come into fullness of possession.

Note how these terms are ever associated in the sacred descriptions of the land of blessing —the honey with the milk. It would seem, however, that we sometimes forget this in our Christian experience. We rest content with the milk, and seem to think it is asking almost

too much of God to give us the honey also. "Just keep me from starving, Lord, is all I want; I ask no more. I'll not be a burden to you." But our God has something better for his guests, if they will but take it, honey with the milk, sweetness of blessing with the daily bread, pomegranates, grapes of Eshcol, and a table garnished with the roses of Sharon, the lily of the valley, and the evergreens of paradise. Joy, sunshine, and beauty are the heritage of God's people, who by faith dwell in "the good land."

Jesus purchased the right and title to this inheritance with his own blood. He is the Sun of righteousness, and he expects his people to dwell in the sunshine, and to reflect that sunshine in lives of cheerfulness. The message of Jesus to the world is a message of gladness. The angels above the Bethlehem cradle called it "glad tidings of great joy," and Jesus himself had no other name for it, even when the shadow of the cross fell full across his pathway. His dying words to his disciples were, "Peace I leave with you" (John xiv, 27); "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John xvi,

33). True, he said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," but he added, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome." It may seem a little strange that tribulation and good cheer should be yoked together in one sentence on the dying lips of Jesus, but so they were; yet good cheer comes last and is the abiding part, while tribulation is but a passing incident. Tribulation is of time, good cheer is of eternity. Tribulation is of the world, good cheer is of heaven. Good cheer is the divine uplifting power which makes the burden light. There were fighting and conflict for Joshua in Canaan, but there were "milk and honey."

How the honey of the good land flows from the heart of Jesus, and distills in heavenly drops of sweetness from his dying lips, even as the weight of the cruel cross presses still more closely in upon his burdened soul!

Note the same beautiful and mysterious antithesis in the terms "joy" and "sorrow" in the dying address of Jesus. With what mellifluous sweetness these two words drop from the Saviour's lips—both "joy" and "sorrow!" Both necessary, but "joy" is crowned the vic-

tor: "Ye shall be sorrowful, but"—ah, the blessed antithesis of this little word but—"but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John xvi, 20, 22). Sorrow is inevitable. "Ye shall be sorrowful," but sorrow is capable of transformation: "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Our sorrow is but the "wrong side" of joy, the world side of God's eternal blessedness, the wilderness side of the Canaan of sweetness. How indeed was the sorrow of the disciples turned into joy when they saw the risen Saviour! It is only on the resurrection side of the grave that we can fully understand God's purposes in our lives. We walk by faith now. We cannot see all the Master Weaver's design in its intricate beauty. Nevertheless it is possible to live the resurrection life here and now, and to catch a little glimpse now and then of the purpose and beauty of the concealed design; but the complete view hereafter.

Not Gethsemane, not Calvary, not Joseph's tomb—none of these complete the story of the life of Jesus. No one writing his life can end

it there. If so, then indeed the last chapter would be headed "Sorrow." But ah, no; there is another chapter, and in that the title "Sorrow" is changed, transformed into "Joy," and the place, not Calvary, but Olivet, and the company, not Roman soldiers and hissing Jews, but adoring disciples, with the transformed sorrow shining in radiant glory from their faces, which look not earthward now, but upward to heaven, while a cloud of choiring angels receive their ascending Lord. "He ever liveth." "Behold, I am alive for evermore." The last chapter of the life of Jesus is yet to be written, but up to the present Joy has conquered Sorrow. The continued history is to be recorded in the sunshine, joy, and sweetness of the lives of his followers. "They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Christian, have you entered into the inheritance of sweetness? If not, you are certainly not living up to your privilege in Christ. Nor are you living up to your duty. This is one of the commandments which Jesus left his disciples. This is an important part of the Gospel,

which somehow fails sometimes to get into our preaching and practice. The best sermon the world ever heard is a cheerful Christian, cheerful even when inclination goes counter to duty, taking up a duty with a smile rather than a frown.

"Charlie, what makes you so sweet?" said a fond mother, caressing her child. "I dess when Dod made me out of dust he put some sudar in," said Charlie. Brother, did God forget this part of the recipe when he made you, or has your unbelief and wilderness life turned the sweet into bitter? If so, I beseech you let the Spirit of God come in and there shall be a glorious transformation—the gall of bitterness into the sweetness of honey, the shadow into the sunshine, the frown into the smile.

Resolve that your life with God's help shall be a life of sunshine, brightening other lives, illuminating some dark corner of the world. It is our oft-expressed desire to be like Christ. But remember that the life of Jesus never cast a shadow on any other life. He lifted up the bowed head. He ever brought the sunshine and dispelled the gloom.

There is blessing in sunshine. A ray once started never stops. At the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second it goes on driving out the dark, and bringing life everywhere. There is power in sunshine. Scientists estimate that there is enough energy in fifty acres of sunshine to run all the machinery of the world. If concentrated it will melt rocks and turn the diamond into vapor. So there is power in the good cheer of God's love concentrated in, and poured through, the heart of a Christian, power to drive out the dark from many a soul and set it burning for God.

Claim your full inheritance, the honey with the milk. Bear patiently the tribulations, but claim the *good cheer,* and share by faith in the victory of Jesus: "I have overcome." Get on God's side of sorrow, and you will find it labeled "Joy." Claim the blessing by faith. "The faithful and obedient shall eat the good of the land" (Isa. i, 19).

As little Bessie was eating her dinner and the golden sunshine fell full upon her spoon, making it send forth a gleam of radiance, she put it to her mouth, and exclaimed "O, mamma,

I have swallowed a whole spoonful of sunshine." We commend this diet to all who would honor the Christ Child. Claim the blessing by faith.

A THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

THE LIFE MORE ABUNDANT

I THIRST the abundant life to know,
The largeness of Thy love;
Wilt thou the Holy Ghost bestow
In fullness from above?

Break down the idols, O my King,
And set my spirit free;
Make thou my soul with gladness sing,
In perfect liberty.

I hate the ties of earth that bind
My soul to sensual things;
I long in fuller life to find
The joy that freedom brings.

I would be fully set apart,
And separated be;
Reign thou supreme within my heart,
To all eternity.

CHAPTER VII

A Theory of Knowledge

The way into the holiest of intellectual power is by faith. It is folly to speak of an education as completed, or even well begun, unless the individual student has come into personal sympathy with the Spirit and mind of Christ.

The spiritual life gives larger and clearer intellectual vision. When we rise into the spiritual we share with God in the plan of the universe. This is an honor conferred upon us to become partakers in the divine purpose. From this vantage ground of the realm of higher spiritual law we look down into the realm of natural law, and much that was before inexplicable is seen now to be a part of a plan, and to have its proper place. It is seen now to be not purposeless, eccentric, unnatural, or out of place, as it appeared in the lower realm of thought, but as essential, natural, and a necessary part of a great design and purpose.

There is a natural philosophy, and there is a spiritual philosophy. Jesus gave his disciples an insight into this philosophy of the spiritual when he healed the man that was born blind (John ix). They raised the old query, which still troubles the student, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" They anxiously awaited the Master's answer to this troublesome problem of speculation, so long discussed by the rabbis. Jesus startled them by the answer, "Neither." They supposed that their dilemma, "this man, or his parents," had exhausted the possible. Jesus brushed all this aside with the one word "neither," and raised the problem at once to the higher spiritual realm of God's moral plans and activities, to which the lower natural realm was but accessory. This case belongs to the "works of God."

Without doubt the man born blind is to-day praising God in heaven that he was born blind. Why? Because by that misfortune he saw the Messiah, and became a sharer and colaborer for all time in the great plan of redemption, while others with good eyes, who looked upon the

man Jesus and conversed with him, had no vision of their longed-for Messiah, but pronounced their own doom and published their own unbelief and blindness when they said, "We know that this man is a sinner" (John ix, 24). But the man upon whom the miracle had been wrought "believed on" Jesus, and so rose into a knowledge of the mystery of his own life's misfortune. His faith elevated this intellectual life, opened his spiritual eyes as well as his natural eyes, gave him a grand and glorious outlook into the plan of his own life, and also brought him an answer to that persistent and haunting Why? which had troubled not only himself but also his neighbors.

Even so, brother, if you cannot just now explain the mystery of your own misfortune, trust God. In due time you will be enlightened, and will praise God for this very experience, which seems now inexplicable. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii, 7). The revelation may perchance be delayed for a season. But the delay is but intended to deepen faith and to lead to a larger and more glorious vision. The man

born blind lived to full manhood in the dark. Jesus delayed to come to the bedside of the dying Lazarus that he might unfold to the sorrowing sisters and believing disciples the larger glory at the tomb of him whom he loved. "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe" (John xi, 15).

You may have been disappointed in business; life's ambitions may have been frustrated; the cherished idol of your heart has been removed; and the why of it all has been beyond your comprehension, above the realm of natural law with which you are familiar. Can you not by faith turn to Jesus, ask his explanation, and hear him say, "That the works of God might be made manifest in you?" (John ix, 3.)

How God in his providence has used the stripes and imprisonment, the perils by land and sea, the shame and disgrace of Paul, for the founding of his kingdom not only in the first century, but for its upbuilding in all the centuries, and for the spiritual growth and comfort of millions! Think ye not, then, that Paul thanks God to-day for all these? Yea, even in his lifetime he learned the lesson, and

had the glorious privilege of rejoicing in his afflictions, because he saw their place in God's plan (Rom. v, 3).

How partial, obscure, and fragmentary was the knowledge of the disciples before Pentecost! How full, clear, decided, and unwavering after the Holy Spirit had come upon them! Every act of Jesus is now brought clearly to their remembrance, and what was before but partially understood now readily finds its place in the great plan of world redemption which unfolds before them. And not only so, but all Old Testament history and prophecy just as clearly now explains itself, when illuminated by the same Spirit.

How clear all this appeared to Paul after Ananias had prayed for him, and his eyes had been opened, and the Holy Spirit had come upon him! So clear was it to him that he dogmatically asserts this great fundamental principle of knowledge: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. ii, 12). Shall we limit this entirely

to what is commonly called religious experience? I do not think Paul so intended. "We have received the Spirit of God, that we might know." If Paul had stopped here, and had left the predicate undetermined, to be limited only by the faith of the individual believer, what a privilege, what a key to knowledge, how plain a road to intellectual power! But Paul supplies a predicate—"the things that are freely given to us of God." But is not this coextensive with our first thought? Who shall set the bounds to "the things that are freely given to us of God?" Does not this open to us the limitless realms of truth? Let faith enter then and draw bounds at its own sweet will. The Spirit opens the door to the universe of truth.

Jesus said to Martha at Lazarus's tomb, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John xi, 40.) Is not this clear, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see?" And what shalt thou see? Nothing less than the glory of God. Yea, glorious things are unfolded to the open-eyed believer. Not man's

puny intellect unaided seeks to penetrate the mystery of life, but God himself unrolls the picture to the astonished gaze of him who will only believe.

Is not Jesus the way, the truth, and the life? (John xiv, 6.) How then can I say that I have a liberal education, and eliminate from my course of study a personal knowledge of Jesus? To know the truth I must study him, to know him I must receive his Spirit. Thus only can I understand his thought and find my own place in his plan.

Jesus himself is the answer to the soul's longing to know. He offers a perpetual challenge to the intellectual curiosity of mankind. When he says, "Learn of me" (Matt. xi, 29), "I am the truth," he assumes to be of all teachers the Teacher. We may conclude, I think, without debate or fear of contradiction, that Jesus is capable of teaching us. We may safely conclude also that he is willing to give us instruction, for his "Learn of me" is not only a challenge to the intellectual curiosity of the race, but also a blessed and loving invitation to every soul troubled by any perplexity to seek

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in him the solution of the otherwise insoluble problems of life.

Now, if a student would take instruction from some noted professor, he must go to that teacher, he must subscribe his name as subject to the laws of the university or institution of learning where instruction is given, he becomes amenable to its laws and government; in other words, he voluntarily puts himself under instruction. And further, if he be a sincere student he gladly puts himself under the personal guidance of the instructor; he obeys his directions. Even so the learner in Christ's school must first matriculate. He must put himself under instruction. If sincere he voluntarily and gladly submits to the will of the Great Teacher. Only by obedience to and faith in his instructor can he learn to the fullest extent of his capacity. As the beauty of truth unfolds before him he realizes that, Blessed are the teachable: for they shall be taught of God. He feels that there is no greater blessedness than to learn of Christ. "He that wills to do his will shall know" (John vii, 17). The willing surrender of the soul to the Great

Teacher is the beginning of wisdom. Are you a true disciple of Jesus? Then, "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom" (Matt. xiii, 11). "But to them it is not given." To whom is it not given? To the disobedient and unbelieving. Faith and obedience are the conditions of knowledge. My dear friend, if you have not already done so will you not now, this very moment, put yourself gladly, unreservedly, and irrevocably under the instructions of the Great Teacher? Write your name down now as from henceforth a learner in the school of Christ.

There is a blessed advantage in learning of him in that we not only receive his instructions, but we have the added advantage, that greatest boon to the true student, the personal companionship of our Teacher. Our Teacher is not only our guide in learning, but our companion in life. We thus have the highest and best advantage in all study. We learn after we have been to school to him a little while that himself is the goal of all his instructions, and we are happiest when through the teachings we touch the Teacher. And may we not

believe that the Teacher is best satisfied when through his teachings he impresses himself upon the willing pupil? The personality of our beloved Teacher is ours—our individual possession; and we rejoice when we come to feel in fuller and fuller measure that we have not only his teachings, but we possess him. He is a Teacher who does not exhaust himself in a day. The more we possess of him the more we desire him. We value his words above all earthly treasure, but we value him still more, and so having him and learning of him we become like him. It is the highest excellence in the teacher to impress himself upon the pupil. This Jesus does in a unique and peculiar sense, in the highest and noblest sense possible. Only those who have learned of him can fully understand this. And he is such a kind and patient teacher, so long-suffering with our stupid attempts to learn, so faithful to repeat the lesson over and over!

If it should be objected that Jesus's invitation to learn of him is not to intellectual fields of investigation, but in the realm of the moral and spiritual, I should answer, Come, never-

theless, for soul rest is on the whole more important to the individual than intellectual greatness, if one were compelled to choose between the two. But, on the other hand, soul rest—to place the argument on the lowest plane—is not an unfavorable condition for intellectual development.

Come, weary one, into the rest chamber of Christ's perpetual presence, and there shall be unfolded to you the treasures of wisdom. "No good thing will he withhold." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, . . . the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii, 9).

GUIDANCE

HE LEADETH

He leadeth me,
Through the clouds,
Toward the light;
Out of the shadows,
Out of the night,
He leadeth me.

The Master leadeth;
Content to feel
His hand, confiding,
Though seeing not;
Through darkness hiding,
The Master leadeth.

He safely leadeth;
Though devils rage,
Their power is broken;
Praise the Lord!
How sweet the token,
He safely leadeth!

He sweetly leadeth;
I rest in peace,
He cares for me;
The clouds disperse,
His face I see;
He sweetly leadeth.

CHAPTER VIII

Guidance

1. *God has promised to guide his people.* Let us fix our minds upon this, settle it once for all, and never go back of it, that God has promised to guide his people. We shall need to come back to it often, perhaps, in moments of perplexity and confusion. We shall need to stop in life's hurry and repeat it to ourselves and rest down upon it. God has promised to guide his people. "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa. xxx, 21). "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Rev. iii, 8). With the voice behind and the open door of opportunity placed before us, we see that God's guidance is not merely a signboard guidance, but a protecting guidance, and a guidance of companionship. "Thine ear shall hear a word." "Certainly I will be with thee" (Exod. iii, 12). "My pres-

ence shall go with thee" (Exod. xxxiii, 14), said God to Moses. And Moses showed his implicit trust in that guidance when he said, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Exod. xxxiii, 15).

This guidance of Israel is a type for all time. The pillar of cloud and fire by day and by night; its protecting presence in the rear when danger threatened there, and the blessed communion of Moses with the divine Presence—what God did do with Israel is a concrete promise in history, a perpetual object lesson of what he will do for every individual in all time who will trustingly follow.

This guidance is unremitting and constant, night and day. "Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. xxvii, 3). It is an instructive guidance. "He shall teach you all things" (John xiv, 26). "He will guide you into all truth" (John xvi, 13). This is the kind of guidance which God has promised to his people.

2. *God is capable of guiding his people.* Set this landmark next, and let it never be removed. "But," says one, "why, yes, of course

God is capable; why should it be necessary to state that fact? It is an axiom." True, but we must begin all study and all life with axioms, and those axioms must be implied and used every step of the way. Our wavering life needs to restate and reaffirm this axiom again and again, for at this very point we fail. We forget the axiom and attempt the solution without it, and end in failure. We may, perhaps, remember that God has promised to guide, but in the stress of anxiety we bend our backs to the great burden, seek out a path for ourselves. Thus, forgetting the voice behind, and failing to take our bearings by the cloud before, we at once, with fret and fume and worry, seek the solution alone and unaided. Does not our action often imply it, and is there not back of all our conduct an implied doubt as to God's ability to do what he has expressly promised to do? Have we not time and again done violence to the axioms of our faith? "He is able" (Rom. iv, 21; Eph. iii, 20). Is it not the highest of presumption to take the matter out of God's hands and assume the entire responsibility ourselves? Shall we assume to

know more than our Creator about the plan and purpose of his handiwork? What impiety! He will care for his own.

3. *Claim guidance.* "Ye have not, because ye ask not" (James iv, 2). "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, . . . and it shall be given him" (James i, 5). But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. We cannot claim guidance unless we are willing to be led. There must be complete and full surrender of will to the guide. We must not dispute nor question the leading. The leader is wiser than the led. He can see farther.

"But, says one, "how can I know that he will not require of me something I do not wish to do, or point out a path I do not want to follow?" Alas! this is not faith. This is not the surrendered will. How soon we have forgotten our axiom! "He is able." "But why should I go this way rather than that?" Again we stumble. There is no "why" in the surrendered life. We have lived all too long in the "why." It is a land of hesitation, of doubt, and may end in rebellion. Some have continued so long in the Why Land that the "why"

has prolonged itself until life itself has become a perpetual *whine*. God's true followers live in the What Land. With face forward, "What next, Lord?" is their constant attitude. Brother, get out of the "why" into the "what." Say, "I will," to God, and let him lead. "The meek will he guide in judgment" (Psa. xxv, 9).

We must settle it once for all that God's ways are not man's ways. He may lead contrary to what you or your best friends think for the time being is best. There may be rough and dangerous ways as well as the green meadows and still waters. There may be African jungles to penetrate, with sunless days and quaking nights. But God leads still. He has promised, and he is able. He makes no mistakes. It is ours only to follow. The plan and the issue belong to him. And, besides, he has left us a sweet and precious promise of some day sharing in the divine plan, and of beholding that wisdom which has led us, though now for a time it is withheld. We are not capable yet of understanding, but we shall be, but on one condition only, that we

trust and follow. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii, 7).

If we follow fully we will have to leave something behind. Abraham had to leave Haran; Moses had to leave Egypt; Paul had to leave Jerusalem. Had they not done so we should not trace their history for instruction to-day. There would be no history to trace. "Leaving the things which are behind" (Phil. iii, 13). "He went out, not knowing whither" (Heb. xi, 8). Brother, cut loose from everything now and follow; God leads, and all's well.

"God liveth ever;
Wherefore, soul, despair thou never!
What though thou tread with bleeding feet
A thorny path of grief and gloom?
Thy God will choose the way most meet
To lead thee heavenward, lead thee home.
For this life's long night of sadness
He will give thee peace and gladness;
Soul, remember in thy pains
God o'er all forever reigns."

Andrew Murray, on receiving congratulations on his seventieth birthday, said that the lesson of half a century of ministerial work to him was that God had for every man a sphere of work and a plan of work. The more unre-

servedly a man submits to God's will the more completely God's work was wrought. He declares that throughout his life any success was secured only by following God's guidance.

4. *The criteria of guidance.* How does God guide? Here we often perplex ourselves, and perhaps worry too much, and sometimes cripple faith with anxiety, which undermines the very foundation of confidence and trust. There are two extremes to be avoided: first, overanxiety; second, rocking-chair indifference, which paralyzes personal energy, which says, "Yes, God will guide, there is nothing for me to do."

Hear a parable: Two birdlings were snug in their nest. One said to the other, "I have a strange feeling in my wings to-day; it seems almost as if I could fly. I am going to stand up and flap my wings a little and see how it feels. My, they are growing stronger; seems as if they would almost lift me up." "O, nonsense," said his mate; "keep still; you'll fall; you're too young. What's the use in trying? You'll fly when your time comes. Besides you are injuring the nest, and you dis-

turb me very much. I am going to lie still and have an easy time." So the days passed, with daily trials by the eager youngling and daily complaints by his companion, till one day the brave young fellow flew away, and away, as if he would never stop, and the little weakling left behind was lonely and pined for his companion. Then all too late he said, "I must fly now," but when he tried to do so his untried wings would not support him, and he just tumbled to the ground, and a great cat spied him and quickly devoured him.

Common sense, human judgment, is God-given, and must be used, and used diligently and prayerfully, in order that it may help the life of which it is a part into the divine plan. It must grope or feel its way sometimes, perhaps, for a time in the dark, feeling after God, trying its wings, but it must continue to grope and try, till, like as the bird feels the supporting, uplifting presence of the surrounding atmosphere, so it feels the touch divine inspheering and uplifting and infilling, and enters into the blessed experience of the harmony of the divine and human which God intended for it.

The soul is now, like the bird, in its element. It is now prepared to fulfill its destiny. The air for the wing, and the wing for the air: there is a natural correspondence. Even so, a divine correspondence; yea, likewise, the soul of man for God, and God for the soul—the trusting soul trying its wings, the insphering Presence of the Spirit of God. Not many days does the bird try its wings; some fly even from the egg. Not long does the surrendered will practice faith. Soon it launches out in fullness of trust, and is borne up and out and away by the insphering Presence of God, out into the fullness of its being, out into the purpose of its existence. The bird has found its life, the soul has found its mission. Wing and air harmonize; so God and human will are in sweet correspondence, long prepared and intended—man's life complete, God's will fulfilled. Behold Jesus, our perfect example, the harmonized life. "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John vi, 38). "I must work the works of him that sent me" (John ix, 4). And how gloriously complete was the life of him

who could say at its close, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do!" (John xvii, 4.) There is harmony in God's design for every believer. He on his side is leading toward it. If you on your side are sincerely reaching after it you will find it, and it is not far off. "They that seek shall find." Faith will soon usher you into it, perhaps suddenly, perhaps so gradually that you scarcely perceive the transition. You are surprised some day to find yourself already enjoying the life of harmony.

Do not afflict yourself with the thought that God's guidance necessarily means something hard and awful, the acme of the disagreeable, contrary to all your make-up, training, inclination and desires. It is quite as likely to be the perfect fulfillment of your highest desires, the realization of your fondest hopes, the real complement and fulfillment of the longing of your whole being, though it may require hardship, venture, trial, and may call out all the noblest ideal of self-sacrifice of which you have dreamed. Once your will is wholly his all the fond desires and heart longings, with the added

accomplishments of education, experience, and circumstances, will find ample realization and their real fulfillment in the course of the divine leading. He uses all, the whole man, nothing neglected, and he will amply provide the milk and honey all the way.

We have said that human judgment must be exercised, but of necessity upon the facts within its range; its sphere is limited. We cannot see the end from the beginning; if we could there would be no need of guidance. Life's journey is not mapped out far in advance, but daily guidance is promised. Thus Israel was led by the cloud and pillar of fire just a day at a time. Moses had the promise, "My presence shall go with thee." The perpetual presence of the Guide was better for them than a map of the journey. So have you, brother, the continued presence of the Guide himself, "Lo, I am with you all the days." "I will never leave nor forsake." We shall truly and successfully follow if we keep in his presence to-day; to-morrow belongs to him.

The inward guidance of the Spirit of Christ, sanctifying and cooperating with our own

judgment, is a better guidance than by any external sign. Neither is the Christian led by external compulsion of any sort, but by suggestion and cooperation. The realm of his personality is not invaded. His will and judgment are respected and appealed to. Guidance does not, therefore, necessitate infallibility of action. He may make mistakes, which he himself afterward recognizes as mistakes, but if sincere he learns by these very mistakes, and thus develops a stronger character. This is God's plan of developing a moral being.

Dr. Marcus Dods has fittingly remarked: "This is the great distinction between the light which Christ is and the light by which the Israelites were led from day to day. They had an external means of ascertaining promptly which way they should go. Their whole life was circumscribed, and its place and mode determined for them. The guidance offered to us by Christ is of an inward kind. A God without might seem perfect as a guide, but a God within is the real perfection. God does not now lead us by a sign which we could follow, though we had no real sympathy with

divine ways and no wisdom of our own; but he leads us by communicating to us his own perceptions of right and wrong, by inwardly enlightening us, and by making us ourselves of such a disposition that we naturally choose what is good. . . . No doubt it is easier to believe in a guide we can see, and that moves before us like a pillar of fire; but supposing for a moment that this dispensation under which we are living is not a great deception, supposing for a moment that God is doing that one thing which he pledged himself to do, namely, giving a divine Spirit to men, himself dwelling with men and in them, then we cannot fail to see that this guidance is of a much higher kind, and has much more lasting results than any external guidance could have. If, by allowing us to determine our own course and find our own way through all the hazards and perplexities of life, God is teaching us to estimate actions and their results more and more by their moral value, and if thereby he is impregnating you with his own mind and character, surely that is a much better thing than if he were keeping us in the right way merely by outward

signs and irrespective of our own growth in wisdom."

Let me give some practical hints from the experience of two well-known persons. They corroborate in a large measure my own experience. I am sure they will be helpful to others.

Henry Drummond inscribed on the fly leaf of his Bible eight maxims, which summarized his own experience of three anxious years of waiting and uncertainty regarding his lifework. They are as follows:

"1. Pray.

"2. Think.

"3. Talk to wise people, but do not regard their decision as final.

"4. Beware of the bias of your own will, but be not *too much* afraid of it (God never unnecessarily thwarts a man's nature and likings, and it is a mistake to think that his will is in the line of the disagreeable).

"5. Meantime do the next thing (for doing God's will in small things is the best preparation for knowing it in great things).

"6. When decision and action are necessary, go ahead.

"7. Never reconsider the decision when it is finally acted upon; and,

"8. You will probably not find out till afterward, perhaps long afterward, that you have been led at all."

Hannah Whitall Smith, in *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life,* distinguishes four criteria or ways by which God reveals his will to us:

1. Through the Scriptures.
2. Through providential circumstances.
3. Through the convictions of our own higher judgment.
4. Through the inward impressions of the Holy Spirit on our minds.

"Where these four harmonize," she adds, "it is safe to say that God speaks. For I lay it down as a foundation principle, which no one can gainsay, that of course his voice will always be in harmony with itself, no matter in how many different ways he may speak. The voices may be many, the message can be but one. If God tells me in one voice to do or leave undone anything he cannot possibly tell me the opposite in another voice. . . . My

rule for distinguishing the voice of God would be to bring it to the test of this harmony."

"He chose this path for thee,
Though well he knew sharp thorns would pierce thy feet,
Knew how the brambles would obstruct the way,
Knew all the hidden dangers thou wouldst meet,
Knew how thy faith would falter day by day;
And still the whisper echoed, 'Yes, I see,
This path is best for thee.'

"He chose this path for thee:
What need'st thou more? This sweeter truth to know,
That all along these strange bewildering ways,
O'er rocky steeps and where dark rivers flow,
His loving arms will bear thee all the days.
A few steps more, and thou thyself shalt see
This path is best for thee."

EXALTATION THROUGH SERVICE; OR, THE WAY TO BE GREAT

THE SONG AND THE BURDEN

THOU didst grant unto me a song, O Lord,
A song of sweetest melody and grace;
And thou didst say unto me, "Sing the song;"
But thou didst lay a burden on me, Lord,
It seemed too great by far for me to bear;
But thou saidst, "Sing the song; the burden bear—
The song and the burden!"

The song was rapturous, heavenly sweet, as if
By angel voices whispered choiring low,
The natal hymn of that new earth to be.
My heart leaped up with joy and glad surprise,
As now I caught the thrilling pulse, and cried,
"I'll sing the song, but the burden, alas!—
The song and the burden."

Yet thou saidst, "Sing the song; the burden bear;"
But still my heart was all so weary, sad.
I cried, "Remove, O Lord, the burden drear,
Then I will sing the song, and O, so sweet,
The world will hear, and hearing heed, and rise,
Newborn, to higher being, nobler life—
The song, not the burden."

Again thou saidst: "Sing, and bear; my grace
Enough; thou shalt sing and thou shalt bear,
And, bearing, sweeter sing; thy fellows, too,
Shall hear, and, hearing, quick new heart shall take,
And nobler be. I'll tune thy heart to sing,
And thou shalt sing the song, the burden bear—
The song and the burden."

I sang the song, and as I sang it sweet
And sweeter grew, and they that listening heard,
With eager look and ear did catch the strain,
And swelled the anthem, ringing loud, to gates
Of heaven and heart of earth tear-stained—the song
Complete alone with sorrow's trembling chord—
The song and the burden.

And so I bore the burden, sang the song,
And, singing thus, the burden lighter grew,
The song much sweeter far; and if, perchance,
The softening tone of burden's strain were still,
The music lost its power, the charm had fled;
And so I sing, and singing pray, "O Lord,
The song and the burden!"

CHAPTER IX

Exaltation through Service; or, The Way to Be Great

"Teach me thy way," is the submissive prayer of the psalmist (Psa. xxvii, 11). No doubt the prayer was answered, for it is evident that God has been endeavoring through all the centuries to teach man his way by his word, by the incarnation of his Son, and by his Holy Spirit. How ignorant are we of God's ways, and how much we need teaching! But, alas! men are so unwilling to go God's way when their prayer is answered, and the way is plainly shown to them, that it would seem as if our Teacher would become discouraged with his willful pupils and give them up in despair. But how infinitely patient is our Teacher! With what long-suffering he teaches the same lesson over and over again!

It is evident that we need instruction, for man is constantly reversing God's processes and doing violence to his laws. Sin has warped

our judgment. We do not perceive spiritual things clearly. This leads to wrong courses of life, and brings spiritual shipwreck. This is evident in our individual ambitions and in our social and political life, and, indeed, often in man's home and Church life. We are not living as God has taught us to live.

"They have not known my way" (Heb. iii, 10), is the sorrowful lament of the Good Teacher. Ignorance of God's way increased by willful disobedience kept Israel out of Canaan, and is keeping thousands of Christians to-day out of unspeakable blessing. Self-condemned, they wander in the wilderness when they might feast on the milk and honey.

Man says, "Get, get, get." God says, "Give, give, give." Man says, "Seek your fortune, that is the first business of life." God says, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven." Society says, "Make all you can out of your neighbor." God says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "Go, sell, give," said Jesus (Matt. xix, 21). "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke vi, 38). "Not as the world giveth, give I" (John xiv, 27). Jesus is the incarnation of

God's way, and "not as the world" is the sum of his teaching, both by precept and example. "He gave himself."

Society says, "Seek pleasure. Associate only with those who will gratify your pleasure. Command all possible resources to contribute to your selfish gratification." And are not many Christian people living on this principle? But God says, "We ought not to please ourselves." "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." And Jesus is our pattern; "even Christ pleased not himself" (Rom. xv, 1-3). "I do always those things that please him" (John viii, 29).

Man says, "I must have my way. The self-willed man is the successful one." Jesus said, "I came not to do mine own will." "I do always those things that please him" (John viii, 29).

Man says, "Exalt self; become great; be first;" and almost our whole education in these days, and our literature also, teaches this lesson. But God says, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." "Humble your-

selves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. v, 6). Who is the agent of humiliation? Self. Who is the agent of exaltation? God. When? "In due time." Who is to determine that time? God. What is my part? Humility through service. The rest belongs to God. How foolish to seek God's place and to reverse the process. The disciples before Pentecost had no clearer conception of this than the Church apparently has to-day, for they quarreled on the way to the cross as to who should be greatest, till Jesus must needs rebuke them with "a child in the midst."

Man says, "Get power, get influence. Blessed is the man who can command the services of others to the greatest extent." Jesus taught directly the opposite. "It shall not be so among you." "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even

the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark x, 42-45). The example of Jesus from beginning to end is to teach us God's way. We might sum it up in three words, "Exaltation through service." We mistake in seeking the exaltation and forgetting the service.

How beautifully Paul has sketched our example in the second chapter of Philippians. He exhorts the Church to unity and to avoid self-seeking by imitating the mind of Christ—verse 5. Analyze carefully what follows—verses 6-11. First, note the steps in Christ's humiliation, the continual voluntary descent from the highest to the lowest: 1. He emptied himself of his glory—voluntary self-renunciation. The first step down is an act of will. "He humbled himself." Humility is not externally imposed. It is self-assumed. Self-abasement takes the place of man's self-exaltation. 2. He abandoned reputation, that which is most dear to man. He would teach us that service is our part; reputation belongs to God. 3. Still lower he goes. He became a "doulos,"

a servant. 4. Took the form of man. 5. Still lower; as a man he humbled himself through perfect obedience even to the extreme of a shameful and dishonorable death. Ah, brother, have we not made a mistake? The way to heaven is down, not up—down with Jesus in humility, down with him in service, as he so beautifully taught when he took the basin and washed the disciples' feet.

Second, note his exaltation, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him:" 1. A name high over all with universal adoration—"every knee shall bow." 2. Universal confession—"every tongue shall confess."

Now, who is the agent of Christ's humiliation? Yes, you are right; it is himself. Who is the agent of his exaltation? Yes, it is God. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." And this we have learned was his mind; to humble self, and leave reputation with God; not to have his own way, but to do the Father's will; not to please himself, but to help others; not to be waited upon, but to serve; and to follow the path of duty even to a disgraceful death.

"How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" (John v, 44.) Did Jesus speak these words of the unbelieving Jews only? Do they not have quite as practical a significance to the Church to-day as then? When the disciples contended as to who should be greatest Jesus rebuked them by setting a little child in the midst. Is there not need of the child in the midst of the Church now? Is the ministry at large free from blame in this matter?

The spirit of self-seeking in the Jewish priesthood prevented them from believing on Jesus as the Messiah. Their hesitancy and unbelief at the door of the new dispensation kept back also the great mass of the Jewish laity. It is well to pause and ask whether the same causes are not at work in the Church of the present day. If the spirit of selfish ambition, the seeking of honor from one another, is sometimes painfully apparent in the Church, is it to be wondered at, when the same spirit is oftentimes conspicuously present in the spiritual leaders, whose very name, "Minister," in-

dicates that they are to be patterns in humility and self-forgetful service?

Are we not shamefully reversing God's order when we scramble for honors and exaltation of self and quarrel for the best places? Exaltation belongs to God. Shall we with impious hands grasp at his prerogative? Nay, leave to God his part, and let us find ours in the blessedness of humble service. He shall exalt "in due time." Do not be overhasty to fix the time of your exaltation. The "due time" belongs to him to determine. He took the basin and washed the disciples' feet and said, "I have given you an example." "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. x, 39).

But how shall we serve? He has taught us. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The service of humanity is the service of Christ. But wherewith shall I serve? Ask him. Power for service is at your disposal. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore" (Matt. xxviii, 18, 19). The Holy Spirit alone is the administrator of power. Receive him by faith.

"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts i, 8).

"When I have nothing in my hand
  Wherewith to serve my King;
When thy commandment finds me weak,
  And lacking everything;
My soul, upon thy greatness cast,
  Shall rise divinely free,
And I will serve with what thou hast,
  And gird myself with thee."

A FAREWELL

HE SWEETLY KEEPS.

"I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. xxvii, 3).

ADOWN the west the sun now glides,
Behind the hills his glory hides;
And we must turn our steps away
To greet the dawn of a coming day.

A day of toil, perchance, and pain,
But bravely borne in Jesus' name;
We'll look for the dawn of the glorious day
When God shall wipe all tears away.

Some morn we'll greet our coming Lord—
Sweet, precious promise of his word!
Till then, farewell; again we'll meet,
And lay our sheaves at Jesus' feet.

The Lord go with thee, this I pray,
And sweetly keep thee all the way;
In darkness drear, or glorious light—
It matters not, his way is right.

His angels watch shall ever keep,
In busy day or deepest sleep.
He knows thou'rt weak; in him abide:
He'll keep his own whate'er betide.

Keep sweet, my child, in him is peace;
Fret not thy heart, from worry cease;
In patience wait, the price is paid:
Thy victory's sure through Jesus' aid.

Each moment watered from above,
We'll fruitful be, and filled with love;
The Lord shall keep thee, sweetly keep:
Night and day he guards his sheep.

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